

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA**

TIM BLEYTHING, et al.,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	
v.)	Case No. CIV-23-764-PRW
)	
NORTH AMERICAN VAN LINE,)	
INC, et al.,)	
)	
Defendants.)	

SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE ORDER

A judicial settlement conference is set before **United States Magistrate Judge Chris M. Stephens at 1:00 p.m. on June 17, 2025.** All attorneys and client representatives attending the conference should report to Courtroom 101 in the William J. Holloway, Jr. United States Courthouse, 200 N.W. 4th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The parties are required to comply strictly with Local Civil Rule 16.2.

I. SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE STATEMENTS

A. Required Statements

Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 16.2(d), each party is required to submit a settlement conference statement, together with a cover sheet in the form prescribed in Appendix VI of the Court's Local Rules, by **5:00 p.m. on June 10, 2025.** The cover sheet should include all attorneys and client representatives who will be in attendance along with each person's email address if not previously provided. Parties should submit the settlement conference statement and cover sheet directly to my orders box at stephens-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov and to all other counsel of record.

The settlement conference statement **should not be filed** on CM/ECF and will not be made part of the case file. Each statement should set forth the party's relevant positions concerning factual issues, legal issues, damages, awarding of attorney fees (if applicable), and the settlement negotiation history of the case, including any specific demands and offers that have been conveyed. Pertinent evidence to be offered at trial, if particularly relevant, may be brought to the settlement conference.

B. Optional Statements

Each party also has the option of submitting a confidential memorandum directly to my orders box at stephens-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov. This optional statement may include any information that would be helpful for me to know in advance of the settlement conference. Any optional statement is due by **5:00 p.m. on June 10, 2025**.

C. Confidentiality

Settlement conference statements and all communications made during the settlement conference are confidential and, except as otherwise permitted under Federal Rule of Evidence 408 or other provision of federal law, cannot be used by any party at trial.

II. OPTIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE MEETING

To aid in my preparation for the settlement conference, I will extend to each party an opportunity to meet privately with their attorney. This meeting is optional for counsel and, if a party's attorney chooses to meet in advance with me, I will be primarily interested in counsel's perception of the negotiations, impediments to the settlement, and objectives for the settlement conference. If counsel wishes to schedule a pre-conference meeting, they should contact Andrea Caster at andrea_caster@okwd.uscourts.gov.

III. PRE-CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS REQUIRED

Before the settlement conference, counsel are directed to discuss settlement with their respective clients and insurance representatives, and opposing parties are directed to discuss settlement so the parameters of settlement have been explored well in advance of the settlement conference. This requires the following:

- By **June 10, 2025**, Plaintiffs must tender a written settlement offer to Defendant's counsel and to me.
- By **June 13, 2025**, Defendant must make and deliver a written response to Plaintiffs' counsel and to me. That response must take the form of a substantive offer in response to Plaintiffs' most recent offer.

Failure to complete these required pre-conference discussions may result in cancellation of the judicial settlement conference.

The parties are advised that the settlement offers called for in this Settlement Conference Order **should not be filed** on CM/ECF and will not be made part of the case file, but instead must be submitted directly to my orders box at stephens-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov. If a settlement is reached before the settlement conference, the parties should immediately notify me through my orders box at stephens-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov.

IV. SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE FORMAT

The purpose of the settlement conference is for me to provide a meaningful opportunity for settlement on terms agreed upon by the parties and to have an informal discussion among the attorneys, parties, and non-party indemnitors or insurers regarding all aspects of the matter that may affect settlement. I may converse privately with any attorney, party, or insurance representative.

A. Required Attendance

The parties are expected to comply strictly with Local Civil Rule 16.2(b), which sets out who is required to attend this judicial settlement conference.

B. Full Settlement Authority

For each party in the case, a person with full settlement authority must attend the conference. The purpose of the requirement for full authority is to have representatives present who can settle the case during the conference without consulting a superior. This requires the presence of each person named as a party or an authorized representative of any party that is a corporation, governmental agency, or other entity. A party's representative may not be an attorney who has entered an appearance in the case.

- Plaintiffs' representative must have final settlement authority, **in the representative's sole discretion**, to authorize dismissal of the case with prejudice or to accept a settlement amount down to Defendant's last settlement offer.
- Except as otherwise provided in Local Civil Rule 16.2(b)(2), Defendant's representative must have final settlement authority, **in the representative's sole discretion**, to pay or to commit Defendant to pay a settlement amount up to Plaintiffs' last settlement demand.
- Any insurance company that (1) is a party, (2) can assert that it is contractually entitled to indemnity or subrogation out of settlement proceeds, or (3) has received notice or a demand pursuant to an alleged contractual requirement that it defend or pay damages, if any, assessed within its policy limits in this case, must have a fully authorized settlement representative present at the conference who must have final settlement authority, in the representative's sole discretion, to commit the company to pay an amount within the policy limits.

Failure to attend the judicial settlement conference with the proper parties and/or proper settlement authority will cause the conference to be canceled and rescheduled and may result in sanctions.

V. REQUESTS FOR RELIEF

Any request for relief from any aspect of this Order shall be made initially by email to Andrea Caster at andrea_caster@okwd.uscourts.gov. Before contacting the Court, counsel should consult with opposing counsel in the case to determine whether there is opposition to the relief requested and include that information in the request.

VI. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Upon my certification of circumstances showing non-compliance with this Order, the assigned trial judge may take any corrective action permitted by law. Such action may include contempt proceedings and/or assessment of costs, expenses, and attorney fees.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 4th day of April, 2025.



CHRIS M. STEPHENS
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE